23: Koenig E-4 (no date) 1939 RD1 Ukraine RD1



777 various prophecies as to the future of the child, but final decision rests with the oldest, whose judgment prevails. These same judges grant the child a star, which shines only so long as he [774] lives; upon his death it falls to earth. Every person at birth likewise receives a guardian angel, whose duty it is to protect him throughout his life. Before starting any new task, and especially when in danger, the peasant calls upon his ministering angel for assistance, saying: "Guardian angel, help me!"[31] Since one's fate is determined at birth, one can do little to change it. This explains, in the popular mind, why one man is poor and another rich, one healthy and another sick, why one lives long and another dies young. It also explains why there are all kinds of children in the world, and why even children of the same parents often differ so markedly.[32]

845 732 A deformed or mentally deficient child is ascribed to the act of an evil spirit, particularly the *diwa-baba*. Such a child has a large head, is always lean, and can never be satiated. With his tremendous appetite he suckles so ravenously that his mother's breast finally withers away. Such a child causes constant trouble, is retarded in its growth and short-lived, and does not reach a stature commensurate with his age until after death.[33]

## II. Christening Ceremonies

851 553 While great secrecy surrounds pregnancy and birth, the ceremonies that follow are ushered in with the greatest publicity. As soon as she has attended to the child and the mother, the midwife begins to make preparations for the christening (*chrestyny*), [777] which must take place immediately. A child who is allowed to remain unbaptized over night is exposed to all sorts of dangers. If at all possible, therefore, an infant is taken to church to be baptized on the very day it is born, even though the hour be late in the evening, the weather extremely unfavourable, and the distance considerable.[34] While the father, who takes

[113]

[31] Kaindl, *Die Huzulen*, p. 5. [32] Szuchiewicz, *op. cit.*, iv, 287.

[33] Kaindl, R. F., "Zauberglaube bei den Huzulen," *Globus*, lxxvi (Braunschweig, 1899), 256.

[34] Kolberg, *Pokucie*, iii, 113; Szuchiewicz, *op. cit.*, ii, 6.